

ACTION TRANSMITTAL No. 2015-50

DATE: December 10, 2015

TO: Transportation Advisory Board

FROM: Technical Advisory Committee

PREPARED BY: Joe Barbeau, Senior Planner (651-602-1705)
Steve Peterson, Planning Analyst (651-602-1819)
Elaine Koutsoukos, TAB Coordinator (651-602-1717)

SUBJECT: Regional Solicitation Applications

REQUESTED ACTION: Adopt that the 2016 Regional Solicitation continue to use the application categories used in the 2014 Regional Solicitation with

- The crash reduction measure to be adjusted to allow for proactive safety elements at railroad crossings and clear guidance to be provided in the congestion reduction measure response information, and
- The measures to be adjusted to accommodate applications for new roadways.

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF ACTION: The 2014 Regional Solicitation included 10 application categories, arranged under three modal categories, as follows:

- Roadways including Multimodal Elements
 1. Roadway Expansion
 2. Roadway Reconstruction and Modernization
 3. Roadway System Management
 4. Bridges
- Transit and Travel Demand Management (TDM)
 5. Transit Expansion
 6. Transit System Modernization
 7. Travel Demand Management (TDM)
 - a. Innovative TDM
 - b. Base-Level TDM
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities
 8. Multiuse Trails and Bicycle Facilities
 9. Pedestrian Facilities
 10. Safe Routes to School

To keep the 2016 Regional Solicitation process on schedule, at this stage of updating the solicitation, TAB should determine whether the above categories should remain and whether any other application categories should be added.

In response to post-2014 Regional Solicitation input, two potential new applications have been discussed: railroad crossing safety projects and new roadways.

Railroad Crossing Safety Projects

This possible need stems from the increase in Twin Cities freight rail traffic and the resulting impacts on highway safety and mobility at at-grade crossings. Rail-highway

grade separation projects are eligible for Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds, but do not score well in the current scoring system. This is due in large part to the inability of the railroad crossing safety projects to score well in the crash reduction measure, which is geared toward roadway intersection crashes, as well as a lack of guidance in the congestion reduction measure.

Options discussed at November 4 TAC meeting:

1. Create a separate “railroad crossing safety” application category. A new category would ensure that at least one railroad crossing safety project is funded. Note that only two such projects were submitted in 2014.
2. Adjust the crash reduction measure to allow for proactive safety elements at railroad crossings, as well as provide clear guidance in the congestion reduction measure as to how to fill out the response.
3. Make no changes.

TAC recommendation: Option 2 – Do not add a new category for railroad projects. Instead, adjust the crash reduction measure to allow for proactive safety elements at railroad crossings, as well as provide clear guidance in the congestion reduction measure as to how to fill out the response.

This option will address the scoring system to better reflect railroad crossing improvements. If TAB selects Option 2, then TAC Funding and Programming at its December 17 meeting and TAC at its January 6 meeting will consider and recommend specific crash reduction adjustments.

New Roadways

During the 2014 Regional Solicitation, new roadway projects created some scoring difficulties as adequate guidance was not given to applicants on how to fill out measures for new roadway projects. A new application category would create an expectation of a new roadway being funded. Five new roadway projects were submitted during the 2014 Regional Solicitation and one was funded.

Options discussed at November 4 TAC meeting:

1. Create a separate “new roadway” category. A new category would ensure that at least one new roadway project is funded.
2. Adjust measures to better accommodate new roadways. These include:
 - a. Current daily person throughput
 - b. Heavy commercial traffic
 - c. Infrastructure age
 - d. Congestion reduction
 - e. Emissions reduction
 - f. Crash reduction
3. Make no changes.

TAC recommendation: Option 2 – Do not add a new category for new roadway projects. Adjust measures to accommodate applications for new roadways.

This option will address the scoring system to better reflect new roadways. If TAB selects Option 2, then TAC Funding and Programming at its December 17 meeting and TAC at its January 6 meeting will consider and recommend specific measures to be adjusted.

RELATIONSHIP TO REGIONAL POLICY: The Regional Solicitation is a key responsibility of the TAB. Through this process, federal funds can be directed to a variety of locally-initiated projects that address transportation needs and help implement regional transportation and development policies. The Regional Solicitation is part of the Metropolitan Council's federally required continuing, comprehensive, and cooperative transportation planning process for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area.

COMMITTEE COMMENTS AND ACTION: At its December 2, 2015, meeting, TAC unanimously recommended continued use of the application categories used in the 2014 Regional Solicitation with the crash reduction measure to be adjusted to allow for proactive safety elements at railroad crossings and clear guidance to be provided in the congestion reduction measure response information and the measures to be adjusted to accommodate applications for new roadways.

ROUTING

TO	ACTION REQUESTED	DATE COMPLETED
Technical Advisory Committee	Review & Recommend	12/2/2015
Transportation Advisory Board	Review & Adopt	